

June 7, 2007

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND
ENERGY CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance Environmental Quality and Energy Conservation Commission convened in a regular session at 7:02 p.m. on Thursday, June 7, 2007 in the West Annex meeting room at Torrance City Hall.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Commissioners Chim, Decker, Griffiths, Reilly, Watson, and Chairperson McCabe.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Deputy Community Development Director Cessna,
Senior Environmental Quality Officer Jones, and
Senior Environmental Quality Officer Switzer.

MOTION: Commissioner Chim moved to grant an excused absence to Chairperson McCabe for the scheduled July 5, 2007 Commission meeting. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

3. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairperson McCabe.

4. POSTING OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: Commissioner Reilly, seconded by Commissioner Decker, moved to accept and file the report of the secretary on the posting of the agenda for this meeting; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Michael Guzman, Paseo De La Playa, stated that he has submitted a precise plan to the Planning Department for a remodel and addition to his home that will adhere to all of the guidelines for the green building program and Leeds standards. He requested that the Commission provide a formal endorsement for the project that would help expedite the plan check approval process. He noted that the first Planning Hearing is scheduled for August 1, 2007.

Deputy Director Cessna pointed out that the Commission could not take action on this item as it was brought up during Oral Communications, but that the home could be recognized as it is being built for any adherence to green standards. She stated that

she would set up a meeting internally with plan checkers in the Planning Department to discuss making the process a little easier.

Daniel Coffee and Arohe Sharma, West High School Environmental Club, provided an update on their efforts since the May 3, 2007 Commission meeting to ban the use of expanded polystyrene in the City. They reported that next school year's board would discuss having a company sponsor for the Environmental Club and that they have communicated with North and South High Schools about forming environmental clubs at their schools.

Mr. Coffee reported that he gave a short presentation at the June 4, 2007 Torrance Unified School Board meeting and that members were receptive. He stated that he was preparing to send a letter and information packet to the Superintendent.

Ms. Sharma stated that she was in the process of setting up a meeting with Del Amo Mall management regarding the use of biodegradable alternatives in the Food Court.

Commissioners offered encouragement and suggestions to the students on how to make an effective presentation and how to gather support for their cause. Chairperson McCabe suggested that they contact Green Ambassadors for assistance and expressed hope that they could serve as a bridge between Torrance Unified School District and the Commission.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

6A. MEETING OF APRIL 5, 2007

MOTION: Commissioner Decker, seconded by Commissioner Watson, moved for the approval of the May 3, 2007 Environmental Quality and Energy Conservation Commission meeting minutes as submitted; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

Items 8A, 8B, and 8C were taken out of order.

8A. GREEN PRIDE

Deputy Director Cessna and the Commission recognized four individuals or groups for their green pride in Torrance: 1) Virginia Hilker, for her work in spearheading the campaign to make Torrance a part of the "Cool Cities" program; 2) Old Torrance Neighborhood Association, for forming a Neighborhood Clean-up Program and sponsoring three clean-up days; Starbucks, for their recycling program for use of old coffee grounds in gardens; and Daniel Coffee and Arohe Sharma, West High School Environmental Club, for their presentation regarding problems caused by the use of expanded polystyrene. She noted that awardees would be announced in Torrance Seasons and that a presentation and actual Green Pride in Torrance awards given at a future City Council meeting.

Virginia Hilker expressed her appreciation to staff and Commission and reported that, as of June 7, 2007, 527 Mayors have signed the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, 66 of which are in California.

Charles Payne, Old Torrance Neighborhood Association, discussed Mayor Scotto's "Pay It Forward" challenge and his participation in three Saturday morning clean-ups. He expressed his appreciation to Old Torrance Neighborhood Association members who participated in the events and the City Yard for providing supplies.

Grant and Jett Hayes talked about how much fun and rewarding it is to clean up the neighborhood.

Daniel Coffee and Arohe Sharma, West High School Environmental Club, thanked staff and Commissioners and shared information with audience members about their efforts to ban the use of expanded polystyrene in the City.

The Commission was in recess from 7:33 to 7:46 p.m. for a photo opportunity.

7B. SIGN TWIRLERS

Deputy Director Cessna introduced Senior Environmental Quality Officer Switzer who reported on the material of record. He stated that staff has been working with the City Attorney's office and has been advised that they are currently unable to enforce against sign twirlers due to First Amendment rights. He noted that a city could impose time, place, and manner restrictions on all signs, prove that sign twirlers pose a public safety hazard, or restrict signs with live people holding them altogether, adding that aesthetics was a also legitimate concern.

Commissioner Decker distributed copies of the Board of Realtor's guidelines that realtors must abide by and suggested that staff contact the City of Palos Verdes Estates to see how its ordinance is written.

Referring to recent court cases, Chairperson McCabe suggested that the City Attorney's office look into minimum content-based exceptions.

Deputy Director Cessna advised that staff is documenting and photographing sign twirlers for a six-month period to provide a potential base for a public safety contention, noting that staff can enforce if a sidewalk is being blocked.

Responding to Commissioner Griffiths' inquiry, she stated that restricting sign twirlers could be included in conditions of approval for new developments.

In response to comments from Commissioner Watson, Deputy Director Cessna stated that the City Attorney's office has advised staff that the statutes used previously will not stand up in court. She added that the best solution might be to ban all signage in the public right-of-way and that staff was considering the possibility of rewriting existing Code.

MOTION: Commissioner Decker moved to support staff in exploring options and formulating an appropriate resolution regarding sign twirlers that will be acceptable to the

City Attorney's office. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

8C. GREEN PURCHASING POLICIES

Deputy Director Cessna reported that staff met with Purchasing Manager Fromm to discuss the use of polystyrene as well as general green purchasing policies. She advised that the Purchasing Division is currently researching policies in other cities and will provide a report at the September Commission meeting.

7. SIGN HEARINGS

Chairperson McCabe explained the policies and procedures of the Environmental Quality and Energy Conservation Commission, including the right to appeal decisions to City Council.

7A. SNP07-00001: SAIGON FLAVOR RESTAURANT – 2515 CARSON STREET

Request: To maintain "as-built" non-illuminated individual channel letter wall signage: 2' high x 10' "Restaurant", on the east facing elevation and 18" high x 16' "Saigon Flavor Restaurant", on the south facing elevation. All copy is made of foam letters with a blue Plexiglas face.

TOTAL REQUEST: 44.0 SQUARE FEET

Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval of the request with the following modification:

1) Remove the words "Restaurant" from each elevation in order to meet 2/3rds length requirement.

With the aid of slides, Senior Environmental Quality Officer Jones reviewed the request and discussed staff's analysis and recommendation. She stated that the overall length of existing signage exceeds the sign criteria for the center and that the program states that signs cannot exceed 2/3 of the frontage. She further noted that there is insufficient negative space to separate the wall sign on the south elevation from the sign on the east elevation, expressed concern that the applicant continues to put up signage without approval and permits from the City, and that staff would like them to hire a professional to patch and repair damage where former signage from a previous business exists.

In response to Commissioner Reilly's inquiry, she stated that only the ground sign is illuminated and that this ground sign counts as part of their signage allowance.

Muoi Le, applicant, and Alen Le, applicant's son, stated that they have taken down the banners in the slides, apologized for having unpermitted signage, and discussed visibility problems for drivers passing by to see their business. They stated that customers suggested that the word "Restaurant" was needed to distinguish the business as a restaurant.

Responding to Chairperson McCabe's inquiry, she stated that staff was willing to accept removal of only one of the two "Restaurant" signs.

Commissioner Watson suggested that the most useful and least expensive compromise would be to remove the larger "Restaurant" sign on the frontage.

Commissioner Reilly suggested removing the smaller "Restaurant" sign and moving it to the east-facing frontage.

Chairperson McCabe explained that there needed to be a reduction in signage and asked for the applicant's assistance in selecting an alternative.

Following discussion, applicant stated that he was willing to take down the south-facing "Restaurant" sign.

MOTION: At 8:45 p.m., Commissioner Griffiths moved to close the public hearing. Commissioner Decker seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

Deputy Director Cessna stressed the importance of obtaining permits before installing signs to avoid these kinds of issues.

MOTION: Commissioner Watson moved to approve SNP07-00001 with the following conditions: 1) the south-facing "Restaurant" sign is to be removed and the area patched and painted; 2) the east-facing "Restaurant" is to be maintained and the damage from a previous business is to be patched and painted, and 3) no unpermitted banners will be used at the location. Commissioner Reilly seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval.

8. INFORMATION ITEMS

9. NEW BUSINESS

Chairperson McCabe welcomed audience member Forest Amsden, Boy Scout Troop #966.

9A. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSON

Commissioner Watson, seconded by Commissioner Decker, nominated Chairperson McCabe for Chairperson of the Environmental Quality and Energy Conservation Commission effective July 5, 2007; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval and Chairperson McCabe was elected Chairperson.

Commissioner Watson nominated Commissioner Chim for Vice-Chairperson of the Commission; Commissioner Chim declined.

Commissioner Decker nominated Commissioner Griffiths for Vice-Chairperson of the Commission.

Commissioner Watson nominated Commissioner Reilly for Vice-Chairperson of the Commission.

Commissioner Chim nominated Commissioner Watson for Vice-Chairperson of the Commission; Commissioner Watson declined.

Commissioners Reilly and Griffiths accepted the nominations and spoke briefly about why they would like to serve as Vice-Chairperson.

A secret ballot reflected that Commissioner Reilly was elected 4-2 for Vice-Chairperson of the Environmental Quality and Energy Conservation Commission effective July 5, 2007. **CITY CLERK NOTE: This matter will be reconsidered at the next regular meeting.**

9B. SUB-COMMITTEES

Following discussion, the following sub-committees and members were reestablished:

Energy Conservation/Cool Cities	Commissioners Watson, Decker, and Chairperson McCabe.
Green Building/Recycling	Commissioners Reilly, Chim, and Griffiths.
Publicity/Outreach	Commissioners Watson and Decker.

Commissioner Watson reported that she was meeting with Reference Services Supervisor Vinke and Library Commissioner Gerber on June 8, 2007 to plan the June 27, 2007 joint programming with the Library Commission. She encouraged Commissioners to attend the showing of "An Inconvenient Truth" and read the companion book in order to participate in the book discussion following the film.

Deputy Director Cessna stated that staff was making plans for the South Bay Energy Savings Center and Recycling Coordinator Sherman to participate in the event.

10. ORAL COMMUNICATION

10A. Deputy Director Cessna stated that the Chamber of Commerce is putting together a Green Torrance website with the domain name greentorrance.com.

10B. Commissioner Decker distributed fliers for the June 16, 2007 Solar Homes Tour.

10C. Commissioner Griffiths apologized for not being able to stay for the National Sports Grill appeal item and informed Commissioners that City Council overturned the Commission's decision.

10D. Commissioner Griffiths announced South Bay Energy Savings Center workshops on June 13, June 21, and July 12, 2007.

10E. Commissioner Griffiths announced that the Energy Resource Center was sponsoring an event on solar and wind power on June 20, 2007 and a "Build it Green" Public Agency Council meeting on June 29, 2007 in the City of Downey.

11. **ADJOURNMENT**

Following a brief discussion, it was a consensus decision for the Commission to go dark in July 2007.

MOTION: At 9:35 p.m., Commissioner Decker moved to adjourn the meeting to August 2, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Annex meeting room. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Watson and, hearing no objection, Chairperson McCabe so ordered.

Approved as Submitted August 2, 2007 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
